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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0022  
INFO RUEHMV/AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

UNCLAS MONROVIA 000134

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: EFIN ETTC KTFN PREL PTER UNSC LI  
SUBJECT: JUANITA NEAL QUERY: INFO RESPONSE

REF: 09 STATE 75015

¶1. SUMMARY: Juanita Neal has long been involved in the Liberian timber industry. She held a lucrative position in the Taylor government, and currently works as an attorney and timber consultant. While there is reason to believe she has maintained ties with the timber companies that conducted logging during the Taylor years, she currently has little ability to unduly influence timber concessions in Liberia. END SUMMARY

¶2. Full name: Juanita Mason Neal. DOB: 05/09/1947. She is married to a dentist at JFK Hospital in Monrovia and they have five children. Neal is the sister of Jonathan Mason, who was implicated in a scandal involving the sale of iron ore in Grand Bassa County to a Chinese buyer, and she is also a cousin to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

¶3. According to Rudolph Melab, President of the Liberian Timber Association (LTA), Neal owned Tiama Logging Company before the Charles Taylor era. She was the first president of the Association of Liberian Loggers, a caucus of Liberian timber companies in the LTA. Although she is a member of the LTA, she has not attended any meetings in a few years.

¶4. Neal was Deputy Minister of Finance under Taylor. Because the euro dropped in 1998-99 and because Liberia's export market was mainly to Europe, she agreed to renegotiate the taxes, especially for land rental, to the benefit of the timber companies.

¶5. Isaac Manneh, with the Association of Liberian Loggers, told Poloff that Neal runs a consultancy named Jafin Consulting with Charlie Green and Charles Collins, contact number +231 06 510 376. They help timber companies pre-qualify for and bid on concessions. Manneh thinks that Neal may be a shareholder of some of the current timber companies. She has represented Rougier Company on a number of occasions.

¶6. Romeo Quiah, former Assistant Managing Director for Planning at the FDA from 2003-2006 and currently at the Ministry of Planning, said that Neal used her position in the Taylor regime to enrich herself. Now, however, Quiah says that she has no position of authority and no ability to influence timber concessions in Liberia.

ROBINSON